

Agency: 477 Department of Fish and Wildlife
Decision Package Code/Title: XB Suspend Comp for Wildlife Damage
Budget Period: 2011-13
Budget Level: PL - Performance Level

Recommendation Summary Text:

This initial 5% reduction option will suspend crop damage payments and funding for professional crop evaluative work to assist private landowners who experience crop losses caused by wildlife during the 2011-13 biennium. Reducing these payments could potentially decrease tolerance for deer/elk populations near agricultural communities, as well as result in economic losses to agricultural producers.

Fiscal Detail

Operating Expenditures	<u>FY 2012</u>	<u>FY 2013</u>	<u>Total</u>
001-1 General Fund - Basic Account-State	(150,000)	(150,000)	(300,000)
Total Cost	(150,000)	(150,000)	(300,000)

Package Description:

New wildlife conflict legislation directs WDFW to develop proactive solutions with landowners to adjudicate deer/elk damage to commercial agricultural and horticultural crops. When damage continues after these cooperative solutions have been applied, landowners can make a claim to receive a one-time cash payment per year if they work with Department staff and a contracted state licensed/federally certified crop adjuster. This reduction option suspends these payments and the associated evaluative work and could potentially decrease tolerance for deer/elk populations near agricultural communities, as well as result in economic losses to agricultural producers.

Legislation (RCW 77.36.100) mandates that WDFW address conflicts with landowners regarding deer/elk damage to commercial agricultural and horticultural crops. Fish & Wildlife Police Officers are responsible to quickly adjudicate these claims so that WDFW can mitigate losses incurred by landowners. Currently Fish & Wildlife Police Officers assist landowners through a plethora of cooperative solutions, i.e.: providing agency permits, herding/hazing materials, lure crops, and landowner incentives. However, in the event the landowner sustains continued damage after these cooperative tools have been applied, he/she may apply for a "one-time" monetary cash payment per year. Landowners must work with department staff and a state licensed/federally certified crop adjuster on contract in order to make a claim with WDFW.

The damage compensation funds are used solely to pay claims and the services of professional crop adjusters on agency contract.

WDFW will suspend crop damage payments and professional crop evaluative work. There will be no staff reductions as a result of the suspension of these funds. The Enforcement Program will no longer process monetary claims for deer/elk damage nor pay for the

management of certified adjusters.

The proposed implementation date for this reduction option is January 1, 2012.

Name and Phone Number of Subject Matter Expert:

Garret Ward, Budget and Records Division Manager, 360-902-2835

Narrative Justification and Impact Statement

What specific performance outcomes does the agency expect?

Suspension of deer/elk damage compensation funds could potentially decrease tolerance for deer/elk populations near agricultural communities, as well as result in economic losses to agricultural producers.

The Department will work primarily on increasing our cooperative and proactive solutions with landowners to adjudicate deer/elk damage to commercial agricultural and horticultural crops. The department will look to increase deer/elk damage permit options and continue to perpetuate cooperative solutions through Wildlife Management recommendations on upcoming seasons and specialized damage hunts.

Currently WAC 232-36-110 allows a landowner to request monetary compensation for deer/elk damage even after proactive measures have been applied. However, since the passage of new wildlife conflict rules in July of 2010, deer/elk damage claims for commercial crops have dropped significantly to just 12 claims in FY2010. This is a 66% reduction from the prior fiscal year. Additionally, by suspending compensation funds, Fish & Wildlife Police Officers will no longer be required to provide the level of service necessary in order to coordinate deer/elk damage compensation and therefore devote more time to fish & wildlife enforcement activities. Enforcement staff can spend in excess of 2,500 hours per fiscal year dealing primarily with commercial deer/elk damage complaints.

Since suspension of the compensation funds will substantially decrease the amount of time Fish and Wildlife Police Officers spend in the field to assist landowners with the compensation program, it will also suspend the administrative operation and management of state licensed/federally certified crop adjusters on contract.

Districts in which deer/elk damage compensation funds are suspended would primarily affect central and eastern Washington, but all districts of the state would be impacted by this reduction.

Performance Measure Detail

Activity: A035 Enforcement

Incremental Changes

No measures submitted for package

Is this decision package essential to implement a strategy identified in the agency's strategic plan?

No.

Does this decision package provide essential support to one of the Governor's priorities?

No.

Does this decision package make key contributions to statewide results? Would it rate as a high priority in the Priorities of Government process?

NA.

What are the other important connections or impacts related to this proposal?

NA.

What alternatives were explored by the agency, and why was this alternative chosen?

The Department first identified opportunities for savings or fund shifts and then looked for reductions that would have the least impact to the agency accomplishing its core conservation mission.

What are the consequences of not funding this package?

As a result of suspending deer/elk damage compensation funds, the agency will work primarily on increasing our cooperative and proactive solutions with landowners to adjudicate deer/elk damage to commercial agricultural and horticultural crops.

What is the relationship, if any, to the state's capital budget?

The Department's 10-year capital budget requests for consideration over \$7 million in funding for fencing to abate property damage.

The 2012 Supplemental Capital Budget requests \$250,000 for crop and orchard protection through a cooperative fencing program where the Department negotiates with landowners and will provide materials while the landowner installs and maintains the fencing.

What changes would be required to existing statutes, rules, or contracts, in order to implement the change?

None.

Expenditure and revenue calculations and assumptions

--\$60,000 General Fund-State and \$240,000 Wildlife Account-State are currently budgeted for this activity during the 2011-13 biennium, but \$300,000 General Fund-State will be reduced by internal agency fund source transfers to achieve this reduction.

--\$15,000 is budgeted for each contract / total of four contracts = \$60,000 for "personal service contracts".

--Remaining \$90,000 for "goods and services" are actual crop damage payments.

Which costs and functions are one-time? Which are ongoing? What are the budget impacts in future biennia?

This is a one-time reduction.

<u>Object Detail</u>		<u>FY 2012</u>	<u>FY 2013</u>	<u>Total</u>
C	Personal Service Contracts	(60,000)	(60,000)	(120,000)
E	Goods And Services	(90,000)	(90,000)	(180,000)
Total Objects		(150,000)	(150,000)	(300,000)